

VZCZCXRO3365
PP RUEHDBU RUEHIK RUEHYG
DE RUEHBUL #0582 0521413
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 211413Z FEB 07
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6278
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 4774
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RHMFIUU/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUCPDOC/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC
RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA

UNCLAS KABUL 000582

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA/FO, SCA/RA, AND SCA/A
DEPT FOR G/JLANGE AND OES
STATE PLEASE PASS TO AID/ANE/TS ACLEMENTS
NSC FOR AHARRIMAN
CENTCOM FOR CG CFC-A
OSD FOR BRZEZINSKI

E.O. 12958 N/A

TAGS: KFLU SOCI ECON AF

SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN: CONFIRMED H5N1 OUTBREAK IN NANGARHAR PROVINCE

¶1. An outbreak of avian influenza in domestic poultry near Jalalabad in Nangarhar Province has been confirmed by testing in the Ministry of Agriculture's Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory in Kabul, with assistance from U.S. Navy Medical Research Unit-3 in Cairo. The Afghan Public Health Institute avian influenza task force met yesterday on the diagnosis of H5 in two birds--at that time not diagnosed as N1--and decided to take action. The task force held a press conference, announcing a quarantine on all animal movement in the affected area; a zonal culling; intensified surveillance, including activating the disease early warning system to monitor for human disease; and a public information campaign. The GoA has banned imports of all poultry from countries with outbreaks of H5N1 and all live birds regardless of origin.

¶2. The outbreak was confirmed as H5N1 by the central GoA veterinary lab in Kabul, which has recently acquired equipment and expertise for in-country laboratory diagnosis with assistance from a technical advisor from U.S. Naval Medical Research Unit-3 in Cairo. The new capability includes PCR (polymerase chain reaction) equipment, for positive identification of influenza type.

¶3. The two positive-tested birds were taken from the same household, and the outbreak appears at this time not to be widespread. Samples submitted from adjacent areas as suspect AI were negative. This outbreak follows the pattern from last year's initial appearance of H5N1 in Nangarhar Province, which was followed by spread to eight other provinces. That outbreak was suspected to have originated in birds imported from Pakistan. This year's outbreak follows an outbreak detected in Pakistan on 5 February. The rapid testing, quick decision making, and appropriate public health action from the GoA are already a sharp contrast to last year's delay and subsequent over-reaction.

Neumann